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A
S P E E C H

of the Right Honourable

WILLIAM
LORD
VISCOUNT
SAY AND SEALE,

One of his Majesties most honourable privy Councell, spoken in
Parliament.

In answer to the Lord Arch-bishop of Canterbur-
ries last Speech, and concerning the Litur-
gie of the Church of England.



Anno Domini, 1641.

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A Speech of the Right Honourable, *William*, Lord Viscount *Say and Seale*, one of his Maiesties most honorable privie Councell.

Spoken in Parliament touching the Liturgie.

MY LORDS,

I Have waited to finde you free from greater busineses, that I might crave leave to speake of some thing that concerns my selfe. And this I have the more desired since my Lord of *Canterburie* last speech, who expressing his troubles, and bewayling the misery of his condition, and of the condition of the church of *England*, (for he would needs joyn them together, which I thinke he may, as the cause and effect, for the miseries of the Church have certainly risen from him) he insisted much upon this. That these troubles had befall him through the malice of two parties, the Papists, and the Sectaries, and by those he said the Church was greatly afflicted. How farre this man will extend this word Sectary, and whom he will comprehend under it, I know not, but I have some cause to feare that I may lye under some misapprehensions in respect of matters of this nature, which how farre it concerneth him your Lordships will perceive by what I shall say. My Lord of *Canterburie* a man of meane birth, bred up in a Colledge, (and that too frequently falls out to be in a faction,) whose narrow comprehension extended it selfe no far

ther then to carry on a side in the Colledge, or canvaſ for a Proctors place in the Univerſity, being ſuddenly advanced to higheſt places of government in Church and State, had not his heart enlarged, by the enlargement of his fortune, but ſtill the maintaining of his partie was that which filled all his thoughts, which he proſecuted with ſo much violence and inconfiderate- neſſe, that he had not an eye to ſee the conſequences thereof to the Church and State, untill he had brought both into theſe diſtrictions danger and diſhonour, which we now ſee our ſelves incompaſſed withall; Yet to magnifie his moderation, preſently after the breaking of the laſt Parliament he told a Lord who ſtretch now in my ſight, that if he had beene a violent man, he wanted no occaſion to ſhew it, for hee obſerved that my Lord Say never came to prayers, and added, that I was in his knowledge as great a Separatiſt as any was in *England*. My Lords, how farre he hath ſpit this venom of his againſt me, I am not certaine: But I may well feare where it might doe me greateſt prejudice; I ſhall therefore intreat your Lordſhips favours and patience, that I may give you in theſe things which ſo merely concerne me, a true account of my ſelfe, which I ſhall doe with ingenuity and cleareneſſe, and ſo as that if I ſatiſfie not all men, yet I hope I ſhall make it appeare I am not ſuch a one as this waſpiſh man was willing to make the world believe.

For the firſt of theſe that he chargeth upon me, it may be he was willing to have it thought that I would not joyne in prayer with your Lordſhips, but reſuſed ſuch a communion, which is altogether falſe, for I ſhould moſt willingly joyne in prayer with you. And further I will ad, that I doe not thinke but ſome ſer- formes of prayer, by ſome men, in ſome caſes, may be lawfully uſed; But this is that which I am not ſatiſfied in, that a certaine number of men ſhould uſurpe an authority unto themſelves to frame certaine prayers and formes of Divine Service, and when that is done, under the name of the Church to injoyne them upon all perſons, in all times, and upon all occaſions to be uſed, and none other: and upon this ground (which makes it the worſe), becauſe theſe come from the publike ſpirit of the Church (when the Biſhop or his Chaplaine ſhall frame them) and others proceed from the private ſpirit of this or that particular man.

This institution is in comparison of power over the Churches of Christ; and over the gifts and graces which Christ hath given unto men: which the Apostles never exercised: nor would assume, and yet they might much better have done it: and the same reasons might then have been alledged for it, that are now. This turns such forms in stead of being directions, into supposition.

This sets aside the gifts and graces which Christ hath given, and thrusts out the exercise of them, to substitute in their places, and introduce a device of man. This distinction of such forms upon all men, turns that which in the beginning necessity brought in for the help of insufficiency, to be now the continuance and maintenance of insufficiency, and a barre to the exercise of able and sufficient gifts and graces. As if because some men had need to make use of Crutches, all men should be prohibited the use of their legges, and injoynd to take up such Crutches as have been prepared for those who had no legs. This I confess I am not satisfied in, yet I will further say thus much, there are with your Lordships some Bishops, men of great parts, able to offer up this worship unto God, in the use of those gifts which God hath endowd them with: and certainly they ought to serve him with the best of their abilities which they have received. Let them make use of their own gifts, may I see them but profess that they account not themselves bound to any forms, nor to any formal they use, more then any other, but that it is free to them to conceive prayer, or to help themselves by the use of any other forme they please as well as this prescribed. And let them practise the same indifferently, that so it may be manifest the fault rests in the person, and not in the Service: is the negligence of him that prayes, or of those who will worke in the institution of that which is of itselfe. And I will not refuse to come to prayer, for I take the manner to be personally, and to reside in the person officiating, only. I know not whether I expresse my selfe clearly to be understood in this or not, and it may seem to be a nice scrupulosity, give me leave therefore to endeavour to make it by an instance, continue. In the time of the Law, when God appointed himselfe to be worshipped by offerings, and sacrifices the shadows and types of those truths which were to come. If a poor man that had not ability to bring a Bullock, or a Ramme, or a Lamb, had brought

a paire of Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons, it would have been in him an acceptable service. But if a man of ability who had herds and flocks, should out of negligence or covetousnesse, have spared the cost of a Bullock or a Ramme, and brought young Pigeons, his service would have been rejected, and himselfe punished: how much more would the Service have been abomination, if men should have taken authority to have enjoined all to bring no other but Turtles or young Pigeons, because some were not able to doe more? In one case there might be a tollerable and lawfull use of that, which otherwise used. (especially if generally enjoined) would have been most unlawfull; God will be worshipped with the fat and the best of the inwards, the best of mens gifts and abilities, which be that worships, or officiates in worshiping, is to doe at his own perill; And if it be left free unto him, the worship may be lawfull to him that joyneth with him therein in it selfe, though performed in a negligent and so in a sinfull manner by the Minister, but if that maner be enjoined, the Service it selfe is to be refused.

Now in the time of the Gospell, God hath appointed the foolishnesse of preaching: (for so the world accompts it) to be the means whereby he will save those that believe; I conceive where there are no gifts enabling men to preach, there might be a lawfull and profitable use of reading of printed Sermons and Homilies, and in such case they might very lawfully be heard; But if some men upon pretence to prevent extravagant preaching, should take upon them to set forth a booke of publike or common Sermons fit for all times and occasions, and should injoyne Ministers to conforme to those, and use no other preaching at all, but the reading of these common Sermons or Homilies so devised for publike worship, this would make it utterly unlawfull, and to be protested against as that which were the bringing in of a humane device and injunction in the place, and in stead of Gods ordinance, to the exclusion thereof, as the Pharises, to establish traditions of their owne, made void the commandements of God: let it be considered what difference there can be found betweene these, but only this, Life and Customs hath ensured us to that of Prayer, not so in this of Preaching, and therefore the will of it would easily appeare unto us, if so enjoined.

My Lords, let me presume upon your patience so farre for ther

as to give me leave to speake to the other Imputation laid upon me, that I am a Separatist, and the greatest in *England*; and first I shall say of this word *Separatist*, as that learned man Master *Hales* of *Eaton*, saith in a little Manuscript of his which I have seene.

That where it may be rightly fixed and deservedly charged, it is certainly a great offence; But in common use among us it is no other then a Theological scar-crow, wherewith the potent and prevalent party useth to fright and enforce those who are not of their opinions to subscribe to their dictates, without daring to question them, or bring them to any rule or examination either of Scripture or reason. And he observeth that this was too usuall, even in ancient times as well as now.

Secondly, I say that there is a twofold separation; one from the Univerfall or Catholike Church, which can no otherwise be made but by denying the faith, (for Faith and Love are the Requisites unto that communion) the other is a separation from this or that particular Church or congregation; and that not in respect of difference with them in matter of faith or love, but in dislike onely of such corruptions in their externall worshipps and Liturgies as they doe admit of, & would injoyne upon others. This is a separation not from their persons as they are Christians, but from their corruptions in matter of worship, as they are therewith defiled; And this separation every man that will keepe himselfe pure from other mens sins, and not sin against his owne conscience, must make. And I will ingenuously confesse, that there are many things in many Churches or congregations in *England*, practised, and injoynd upon all to bee practised and suffered, which I cannot practise, nor admit of, except I should sin against the light of my conscience, untill I may out of the word of God be convinced of the lawfulnessse of them; which hitherto I could never see sufficient ground for; But my Lords, this is so farre from making me the greatest separatist in *England*, that it cannot argue me to be any at all; for my Lords, the Bishops doe know that those whom they usuallly apply this terme unto are the Brownists (as they call them by another name) and they know their tenents. The truth is, they differ with us in no fundamentall point of doctrine or saving truth, as I know.

Their failing is in this: they hold that there is no true Church in *England*, no true Ministry, no true worship, which depend the

one upon the other, they say all is Antichristian: here is their error; they distinguish not between the *best* effect, purity of a true Church, and the *effect* or true being of it, though with many defects and grosse corruptions. But conclude that because such things are wanting, which are indeed necessary to the well being of a true Church, and to be desired, therefore there is none at all in being. I hold no such opinion; but do believe to the contrary, That there are in *England* many true Churches, and a true Ministry, which I doe heare, and with which Churches, I could joyne in communion, were those yokes of bondage which are laid upon them taken off, and those corruptions removed which they doe contrary as I thinke to their duty) yeeld unto and admit of, and this I am sure no separatist in *England* holdeth that deserves that name. Therefore I hope your Lordships will in that respect let me stand right in your opinions; I shall now end with two requests. The one that your Lordships will please to pardon me for troubling you with so long a discourse concerning my selfe, I have not used it heretofore, and I am not like to offend againe in the same kind, if it is but once, and your Lordships will consider the occasion. The second is humbly to intreat of you, that where you know there is one of the same God worshipped, one and the same faith embraced, one and the same spirit working love, and causing an unblameable conversation without any offence to the State, in your brethren, that in all these concur with you, you will not suffer them for Ceremonies, and things to you indifferent, but not to them but burthens, which without offence to the State, or prejudice to the Churches, you may take off if you will) to bee thrust out of the Land, and cut off from their native Country. I troy, for if you thus shall wound the consciences of your brethren, you will certainly offend, and sinne against Christ.

FINIS.

